

The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Pendle

Phantom footsteps and the sounds of doors opening and slamming brought staff running in the maternity wing, just in time to discover and save a baby from suffocation.

It was a chilly November evening in 1968, and the maternity wing of Chorley Hospital was bustling with activity. Nurses hurried about their duties, tending to expectant mothers and their newborns, while the soft hum of conversation filled the air. The hospital, nestled in a quiet corner of Lancashire, had earned a reputation for its excellent care and welcoming atmosphere.

In Room 203, young Sarah Thompson lay in her hospital bed, cradling her newborn son, Michael, in her arms. The joy of motherhood had enveloped her, and the sound of her baby's gentle coos brought a smile to her tired face. Sarah had longed for this moment for years, and now, as she held her precious child, she couldn't have been happier.

As the evening wore on, Sarah began to feel a strange sense of unease. It started as a subtle sensation, a feeling of being watched. She tried to shake it off, attributing it to postpartum exhaustion and her overactive imagination. However, as the minutes passed, the sensation grew stronger, turning into an eerie certainty that she was not alone in the room.

Sarah glanced around the dimly lit room, her heart racing. The curtains rustled gently in the breeze, but the windows were firmly closed. The soft glow of the nightlight offered little comfort as she scanned the room, searching for any sign of an intruder. There was nothing.

Just as she was about to convince herself that it was all in her head, she heard it—a faint, ghostly sound of footsteps approaching her bedside. It was as if someone was walking slowly, stealthily, towards her.

Terror gripped Sarah as she clutched her baby tighter. She couldn't see anyone, but the footsteps were unmistakable, growing louder with each passing moment. Panicking, she reached for the call button to summon the nurses. Before she could press it, the door to her room creaked open slowly, as though pushed by an invisible hand.

The nurses on duty that night, Jenny and Lucy, were stationed nearby. They exchanged puzzled glances as they heard the strange commotion coming from Room 203. Without a second thought, they rushed down the corridor and reached the room just in time to witness a chilling sight.

The footsteps led to Michael's crib, and as Jenny and Lucy entered the room, the door slammed shut behind them with a deafening crash. The room was now in total darkness, illuminated only by the pale moonlight filtering through the curtains.

Jenny fumbled for the light switch, her heart pounding. When the room was finally bathed in light, they saw the source of the mysterious footsteps—a transparent figure of a nurse, dressed in a uniform that seemed out of place for 1968. The ghostly nurse was hovering over Michael's crib, a haunting expression on her face.

Lucy gasped and whispered, "It's Nurse Eleanor, from the old records. She worked here in the 1930s. She was rumored to have died under mysterious circumstances."

Nurse Eleanor's spectral hands reached towards baby Michael's face. Jenny, her instincts kicking in, moved swiftly, snatching the baby from the crib just as the ghostly nurse's fingers brushed his cheek. The moment she did, the room plunged into darkness once more.

But the sudden darkness was not enough to deter Jenny and Lucy. They knew they had

to act quickly. With trembling hands, Lucy fumbled for the light switch again, and as the room lit up, Nurse Eleanor had vanished.

They found themselves in a room filled with the sounds of slamming doors and echoing footsteps. Panic surged through them as they realized they were not alone. The hospital staff had been alerted by the commotion, and they rushed to Room 203, fearing the worst.

Jenny, still clutching baby Michael, relayed the eerie encounter to her colleagues. It was then that the hospital's historian, Mr. Reynolds, arrived. He confirmed the story of Nurse Eleanor, a nurse who had mysteriously disappeared decades ago while working in the maternity ward.

In the wake of this supernatural encounter, Chorley Hospital underwent a series of investigations, and the legend of Nurse Eleanor became a part of its history. Sarah and her baby Michael, thanks to the timely arrival of Jenny and Lucy, were unharmed. The hospital staff came to believe that Nurse Eleanor, though a phantom, had returned to protect the infants in her care.

From that day forward, the footsteps and ghostly occurrences in the maternity wing became less frequent, but the memory of Nurse Eleanor's protective presence lingered, a comforting and eerie reminder of the unexplained mysteries that sometimes dwell in the shadows of our world.

By Donald Jay